

Rheumatology Occupational Therapy Patient Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)

Other formats

If you need this information in another format such as audio CD, Braille, large print, high contrast, British Sign Language or translated into another language, please contact the PALS desk on 01271 314090 or at rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net.

What is Patient-Initiated Follow-Up (PIFU)?

Patient-initiated follow-up (PIFU) puts you, the patient, in control of when you are seen by the occupational therapy department. It means spending less time attending hospital appointments, but still having access to clinical support when you need it.

PIFU enables you to make an appointment if you develop an urgent problem with hand function. PIFU can help you manage your own hand function with support from friends and family, and seek help from occupational therapy if you were to develop a hand problem.

How will I know if I'm suitable for PIFU?

Your occupational therapist has recommended you for a PIFU appointment.

You will have been given an individual timeframe based on your hand needs. The timeframes are:

- 12 months
- 24 months

During this time, you should contact us if you have any worries or concerns with your hand function. DO NOT wait until your timeframe is completed to contact us.

If your timeframe has come to an end and you have not developed any hand problems, the occupational therapy service will contact you to review your hand function. In discussion with an occupational therapist, we will either arrange for an appointment to see you in clinic or set another time frame, which will depend on your hand function.

When should I call for a PIFU?

You should contact us if you have any worries or concerns with your hands.

In particular, if you were to develop any urgent concerns with your hands such as:

- Difficulties with every day activities
- Your splint does not fit as well or has become uncomfortable
- Your hand becomes red, hot, swollen and painful, and you feel unwell*

*PIFU is not a replacement for urgent medical advice. If you require urgent medical advice, you should contact your GP, NHS 111, your local walk-in centre or, if you are really unwell, your local Emergency Department (A&E).

How will I book a patient-initiated follow-up appointment?

This is a quick and easy process.

If you develop a hand problem and need advice or an appointment, just follow the steps below and the team will help you.

4 easy steps:

1. Call or email the therapy admin team

Tel: 01271 322378 (8am-4pm)

Email: rduh.rheumatologytherapyteam@nhs.net

If you need to leave a message when you call, please leave the following information:

- Your full name and date of birth
 - Your hospital number and/or NHS number
 - A telephone number so we can call you back during our opening hours
2. Explain to the occupational therapy team you are having hand problems and need some clinical advice.
 3. The team will call you to review your concerns and decide whether you need immediate clinical advice for your symptoms or if you need an appointment. If an appointment, we will agree a date and time with you. We will arrange an appointment for you within 10 working days.
 4. Attend your clinic appointment.

What if I need advice or guidance, can I contact you?

Yes, if you feel that you need advice or guidance about your hand, you can contact the occupational therapy service by either emailing (preferred option) or phoning us. An occupational therapist will then contact you to discuss your worries or concerns, direct you to where you can access video advice, and offer help and support.

Will you still be looking after me if I'm on PIFU and don't initiate an appointment?

Yes. If we haven't heard from you within your timeframe, the occupational therapy department will make contact with you to check that you and your hand are doing all right.

More information

There are some helpful hand healthcare information leaflets and videos on how to manage and look after your hand on Versus Arthritis website www.versusarthritis.org.

PALS

The Patient Advice and Liaison Service (PALS) ensures that the NHS listens to patients, relatives, carers and friends, answers questions and resolves concerns as quickly as possible. If you have a query or concern call 01271 314090 or email rduh.pals-northern@nhs.net. You can also visit the PALS and Information Centre in person at North Devon District Hospital, Barnstaple.

Have your say

Royal Devon University Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust aims to provide high quality services. However, please tell us when something could be improved. If you have a comment or compliment about a service or treatment, please raise your comments with a member of staff or the PALS team in the first instance.

Tell us about your experience of our services. Share your feedback on the Care Opinion website www.careopinion.org.uk.

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